

PACIFIC REGION

SAFETY NEWSLETTER

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Lt Col WALLY JAYNES, DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF SAFETY

IFR.....REVISITED

I received several comments on last months' newsletter article on instrument ratings for pilots. Thanks to everyone. All were very positive in agreeing that an instrument rating is a very strong argument for safe flying.

There is one drawback, however, that is shared by some (if not all of us) and that is the high cost of IFR flight, training, and currency and IFR charts and instrumentation.

The cost of a Jeppesen western region (11 western states) IFR chart subscription, including approach plates is over \$400.00 plus shipping. A full GA Jeppesen package for Alaska, California, or Hawaii is over \$200.00. Ouch!

To put that into perspective, the cost of the Jeppesen Standard Full Service, Full USA package starts around \$1,167.00, fits 10 two inch binders and weighs over 22 pounds. So, aren't you glad you don't have to trek around the Nation, flying IFR every day. And of course you have to subscribe to the revision service to stay legal with the FAA.

Some pilots prefer to fly with the FAA charts at less expense, but some of us are annoyed by the bulkiness of this system. But then, tearing out Jepp pages and inserting updates is kinda annoying too.

Another person was concerned that his GPS card in the CAP aircraft assigned to his unit is out of date. So we also have the expense of hardware issues as well.

SO, why are we re-hashing all of this? First of all, this is your newsletter and as such it is a healthy forum for discussion of things that affect us in our pursuit of CAP objectives in a totally safe manner.

To say that we must all have an IFR rating is noble but just not realistic. We need to be instrument rated for all of the reasons stated in last months' newsletter. But is it totally attainable? No. *It is expensive.* Many pilots give up other items of life's luxuries just to be able to afford to fly. Sometimes, only a pilot will understand this, but we know, right?

The bottom line should be this. If you can afford IFR training, currency, equipment and charts, do so. You know the rewards are worth it. If you cannot maintain your currency, at least fly under the hood from time to time with a qualified safety pilot. You will maintain your edge for flying "on the gauges" in case you ever need to.

And if you are a VFR pilot, get some hood time and study the basics of IFR flight. Being able to control an aircraft that inadvertently entered IMC can help you to at least execute the proverbial "one-eighty" to get you back to an environment that will safely get you to the ground.

While we are on the subject, get some night flight instruction and maintain night currency. It is just a step away from IFR if your lose all visible references. The gauges in front of your eyes can be far more accurate than the seat of your pants.

Remember, IFR training can be like life insurance. The big difference is that you are the beneficiary, not one of your heirs.. OK, is this enough IFR talk for now?

